

The Suffolk News-Herald

Navy to move 1,000 jobs to Suffolk

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Nearly 1,000 employees of four military commands will be moving into North Suffolk in the next year, city officials announced Wednesday.

The Naval Network Warfare Command, NNWC Global Network Operations Center Detachment, Navy Cyber Defense Operations Command and Navy Cyber Forces will be moving into buildings vacated by the 2011 disestablishment of U.S. Joint Forces Command, Economic Development Director Kevin Hughes said.

The commands bring an estimated total employment of 993, counting military, civilians and contractors, Hughes said. The estimated annual payroll: \$88.9 million.

"I don't even know what to say, I'm so excited," Mayor Linda T. Johnson said during Wednesday's City Council meeting. "It just puts Suffolk right there where we need to be."

The commands are being moved from Virginia Beach and Norfolk. They are set to be in place by June 25, 2013.

The announcements fulfill the last of the three "R" goals Suffolk set in response to the JFCOM closure — reject, retain and replace.

The efforts of Suffolk and many others in all levels of government to reject the disestablishment were ultimately unsuccessful. The command was shuttered in August 2011 over their objections.

But efforts to "retain" positions and functions in the area went better. Many of the personnel and duties of JFCOM were taken up as part of the Joint and Coalition Warfighting, which includes about 1,100 employees at the North Suffolk site.

The last goal was to replace the positions that were lost. City officials visited Washington and enlisted legislators' help to tout the benefits of the empty buildings with advanced technological capabilities and the legions of highly trained employees already living in the area.

Wednesday's announcements are a gratifying result of the work, Hughes said.

"It was something we took to heart," he said.

Johnson praised the work of city staff and thanked legislators at all levels, as well as Gov. Bob McDonnell's office, for helping in the process.

Rep. Randy Forbes, especially, "told us not to give up the hope and the faith," she said.

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